

St. Paul for projects that St. Petersburg doesn't benefit from, and St. Paul doesn't deem worthy enough to spend its own money on.

Finally, it is said that earmarks can "grease" legislation by buying off the votes of individual Members. Add a few local projects for that Member, and suddenly a bill he would never vote for on its merits becomes a local imperative overriding his sound judgment. But explain to me, how is that a good thing?

Our new majority needs to make a dramatic, concrete, and credible statement that business as usual in Washington is over. Is there a more powerful statement we can make than to swear off this wasteful and corrupting practice of congressional earmarking?

AMERICA, WE HAVE LIFT OFF

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SOTO) for 5 minutes.

Mr. SOTO. America, we have lift off. In a surge of fire, thunder, and smoke, Artemis I lit the early morning sky and was launched into the cosmos. At 9 million pounds of thrust, Artemis I is the most powerful rocket ever launched from the Earth. I was honored to see this historic flight firsthand early yesterday morning.

Now, after 50 years, America takes its first major step toward going back to the Moon; and we are bringing our many international partners with us, including the EU, Japan, Canada, and other allies.

In Central Florida, we locals beam with pride that Artemis launched from the storied 39B pad from Cape Canaveral.

This first mission was a long time in the making. The Orion spacecraft began to be developed during the Constellation program from 2005-2010.

In 2017, I was proud to vote formally to establish the Artemis program. Over the next 5 years, America got to work, including every State. Many Central Floridians helped build or assemble the Orion capsule, the Space Launch System, the crawler transporter, and other components.

During that 5-year period, NASA and SpaceX also kept busy on another key project, launching the Crew Dragon spacecraft. On May 30, 2020, I saw, firsthand, Astronauts Bob and Doug launch in the Spacecraft Endeavour and dock at the International Space Station. This was the first crewed launch from American soil in 9 years.

Since then, we have seen multiple SpaceX and Blue Origin crewed flights. Travel in low Earth orbit to and from ISS is now a regular occurrence in Central Florida.

With these flights well in hand, NASA turned its efforts toward deep space exploration once again. As the most powerful rocket ever to fly from the Earth, we knew the first Artemis launch would never be easy. But America never gives up.

It turned out that, after two scrubbed launches, the third time was the charm. As I stand here this morning, the Orion spacecraft just had its next burn to set it on a course for a lunar flyby. The closest approach to the Moon will be on November 21, before entering a distant retrograde orbit around the moon on November 25. It will roughly travel 1.3 million miles, farther than any other crew-designed spacecraft that has ever traveled.

It is a test flight, of course, so we will push Orion's capabilities to the maximum to ensure it is safe for future astronauts. Then Orion will return to the Earth in about 25½ days. After that, NASA will construct extensive evaluations of the returning Orion capsule.

From there, the future of crewed lunar spaceflight will begin to accelerate. In 2024, *Artemis II* will be the first crewed launch around the Moon in a new craft. In 2025, *Artemis III* crew will have the first woman and next man land on the Moon. And in 2027, *Artemis IV* will dock with the Lunar Gateway Space Station and begin our permanent presence on the Moon.

We will seek to discover water, learn from the harsh lunar environment, and advance new technologies. By the 2030s, these experiences and innovations will help us prepare to go to Mars and beyond.

For today, let us take a moment to appreciate and thank the tremendous accomplishments of Administrator Bill Nelson and the amazing people at NASA. Yesterday was a critical milestone in our country's space history. This is a first major step for America to go back to the Moon, and then on to Mars and beyond.

CONGRATULATING JASON MAREE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the service of Jason Maree of Northern Cambria, Pennsylvania.

Mr. Maree had his Pass in Review for the United States Navy, an important step in passing basic training and becoming a sailor.

To his family and those who know him well, Jason is a driven and dedicated person. When he graduated from Northern Cambria High School this spring, he knew military service was the best avenue for his life.

Coming from a family where his mother is retired from the Army, and his grandfather served in the Marine Corps, Jason naturally felt a call to serve after high school.

Prior to serving in the United States Navy, Jason was an active member of his community and served on the Northern Cambria Volunteer Recreation Board.

We are thankful, both as a community, and as a Nation, for Jason Maree

and for all those who are serving in our military.

Congratulations on becoming a sailor in the United States Navy, Jason.

CONGRATULATING AMY SHIELDS

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Amy Shields of the Allegheny Hardwood Utilization Group, or AHUG, on being named to the Pennsylvania top 100 in agriculture list.

The hardwood forest products industry represents a major part of Pennsylvania's economy. Pennsylvania's Allegheny Plateau region alone produces 80 percent of the cherry hardwood supply of the entire world.

This is a critical ingredient for producing furniture and home goods for customers at home and abroad. This industry is fortunate to have their interests represented by Amy Shields, who is the current Executive Director of AHUG and the voice of the timber industry in Pennsylvania.

Ms. Shields is a longtime veteran of the timber industry and has been a tireless advocate for business across 14 counties in Northern Pennsylvania.

Because of her efforts, loggers, sawmills, and hardwood manufacturers can continue to provide the highest-quality forest products to the world.

Congratulations, Amy, on this great accomplishment.

CONGRATULATING THE PENNSYLVANIA 4-H DAIRY JUDGING TEAM

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Pennsylvania 4-H Dairy Judging Team on their top honors at the 100th National 4-H Dairy Cattle Judging Contest at the World Dairy Expo.

In October, the Pennsylvania team traveled to Madison, Wisconsin, to compete in the dairy cattle judging contest. The Pennsylvania team was made up of four members, with Ellie Curtis of Warren County representing the Pennsylvania 15th Congressional District.

Their hard work paid off. Ellie Curtis placed fourth overall with the Ayrshires. As a team, Pennsylvania was first for overall placing for Jerseys. They ranked second in oral reasons, Brown Swiss and Guernseys, third for Ayrshires, and fifth for Holsteins.

As a result of their victory, the team has qualified to represent the United States this summer at the International Dairy Judging Contest in Glasgow, Scotland.

Congratulations to Ellie and the entire Pennsylvania 4-H Dairy Judging Team.

CONGRATULATING THE INDIANA COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Indiana County Conservation District on their 75th anniversary celebration.

Since 1947, the Indiana County Conservation District, or ICCD, has been protecting the natural resources of Indiana County and working to improve